

ABSTRACT

An apparatus includes semiconductor processing equipment. A particle detecting integrated circuit is positioned in a vacuum environment, the particle detecting integrated circuit containing a device having a pair of conductive lines exposed to the vacuum environment. The pair of conductive lines is spaced at a critical pitch corresponding to diameters of particles of interest. A computer system is linked to the particle detecting integrated circuit to detect a change in an electrical property of the conductive lines when a particle becomes lodged between or on the lines.

20807713.doc